Practical Farm Notes

From Actual Experience.

"Agriculture is the Most Healthful, Most Useful, and Most Noble Employment of Man."
—George Washington.

Sorghum for Hay.

In growing sorghum for forage we sow thickly with a seed drill. It is cut when about waist high and allowed to remain on the ground until thoroughly dried out. It is then raked and stacked at once. Cattle, horses and sheep do well on this kind of rough feed. It is eaten up more completely than any other kind. Sow the regulation sorghum syrup seed.—William Thompson.

Breaking Colts.

Break to lead very young, never put a halter on that may be broken, as a break may spoil the colt. Feed grain as soon as possible. Break to drive early. Never work until four years old. In breaking a colt always hitch with a steady, strong horse. Always have the harness fit well, especially the collar. A work horse should have daily two pounds of feed for every 100 pounds of live weight, and 18 pounds of this should be grain. It is a mistake to feed as much hay as most farmers do. Water before and after feeding. Keep the teeth in good shape, as all the reward and pleasure that many of our farm horses receive is what they eat, and we should see that this process is not painful.—J. A. Harvey.

A Great Milk Trust.

A milk trust has recently been formed with an alleged capital of $30,000,000, and it proposes to monopolize the milk business in the States of Masachusetts, New York, Vermont, Connecticut and Rhode Island. It is called the New England Dairy Company and proposes to make the farmers in those States dance to the tune of the prices it shall put upon the milk and milk products they may have to sell. Where this business of forming trusts will end no one can foresee. They will either become so ponderous as to fall to pieces from their own weight, or else legislation by all the States working in harmony will have to strangle them as a poisonous viper that is dangerous to the best interests of the masses of the common people.

Educating Farmers.

No State has been more active in the education of its farmers in improved dairy methods than the State of Wisconsin. As a result of the education of the people of that State in this direction the net gain in the manufacture of butter in ten years has been six and a half million dollars, and the net gain in the value of cheese manufactured in that time has been a round million dollars, making a total net gain in ten years for butter and cheese alone of seven and one-half million dollars. And the increase in the value of the dairy cattle has been many millions more, to say nothing of the saving of feed and labor that was formerly thrown away on poor cows that did not pay for their keeping but were kept at a loss. This shows that the education of the farming classes adds to the wealth of the State and is a benefit to all the people.

Grape Vines for Cuttings.

The best time to secure grapevine cuttings is in the fall, after the first heavy frosts that have removed the foliage. Cut the cuttings in three-bud lengths from good, strong, vigorous canes, of the last summer's growth, throwing away the small or immature end of the cane. Put the cuttings in a moist sand bed, not wet, in the cellar, where they will keep moist and not freeze. In the spring after the dangers of frosts are past, spade up a bed of rich soil, if a mixture of clay and sand all the better, and also, if partially shaded, providing they are not near trees that will sap the moisture. Dig trenches, place the cuttings in the trenches at an angle of 45 degrees, with the top bud just at the surface, and the moist, fresh dirt firmly pressed around the lower buds. Then cover the entire bed with chaff, in which there are no weed seeds; or, what is better, sawdust, or something that will keep down the weeds and retain the moisture in the ground. During the dry spells in summer thoroughly sprinkle the bed, keeping it moist, but not soaked, continually, and 80 or 90 per cent of the cuttings thus treated will grow. Just before freezing weather comes on in the fall the young vines should be removed from the propagating bed and placed in the sand bed in the cellar for the first winter. The following winter they can be set in vineyard and remain there, being pruned and cared for just the same as those sent from the nurseries.

One advantage in propagating at home is, you always know just what variety you have, while unscrupulous dealers often send vines not true to name. We have vines ordered and received from two different nurseries, both called Niagaras; one lot bears a sweet, delicious grape, white, with thick skin; the other a green-white grape, a great bearer, but watery and of inferior quality. —Michigan Farmer.

Bees in Central Kansas.

This has been a hard winter on everything and especially bees. The sudden changes from warm to cold with high winds killed many bees that had plenty of honey.

The most killing storm came from the northeast with fine snow that drifted into the doors of our hives and froze three that had clustered over the door.

Reports from over the county are not encouraging; some lost eight out of ten; four out of five, and so on. Our loss is, up to date, four out of seventeen. But one does not need to be discouraged. Those that are left must be hardy stock, and can be fed with the honey from those killed out and put in first-class condition by swarming time, so that they will soon fill the empties, and will have full drawn combs to start with.

Now is the time to feed out the honey from the old black combs filling in with the newest bright frames.

Be sure to look over the hives after every blizzard and shut up tight any hives that have been killed out or you will have the whole apiary robbing as soon as they find the hive has no guards. A. K. BOYLES.

Tree Borers.

The round-headed borer (saperda candida) is one of the troublesome insects, and it has killed many a tree. The eggs are deposited in May or June when the weather begins to get warm, near the base of the trunk of the apple tree. The larvae eats its way through the outer bark to the inner and takes about three years to develop. It works in the sapwood, where it forms flat, shallow cavities, filled with sawdust-like castings. These are often seen on the bark and indicate where the borer is at work. As it reaches maturity it cuts a passage upward into the solid wood, and then it curves toward the bark. In this channel it enters the pupa stage about spring. When fully developed it is an inch long and has a round head that distinguishes it from the flat-headed borer, which also affects the apple tree.

Remedy—Examine the trees in autumn, and where the sawdust-like castings indicate the presence of the borer a stiff wire may be pushed in and the larvae killed, or sometimes the larvae can be cut out with a knife. About the 1st of June apply the following mixture to the trunk of the tree: One pound of hard soap, or one quart of soft soap in two gallons of water, heat to boiling and add one pint of crude carbolic acid; make a second application in three weeks. This mixture can be put on the trees with an old scrubbing broom or brush. Rub it well into the bark.—Wm. L. Moore.

Farmers' Mail.

Free delivery of mail in the farming districts seem to be making rapid progress and constantly growing in favor. In Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa it is being tried in quite a number of places and where once tried the results have proved so satisfactory that the people would not consent to its being discontinued. Bad roads are the greatest drawbacks to the efficiency of this service. The Postoffice Department is trying to establish the routes so that a carrier can make a trip of twenty-five miles in a day. If the roads are good this can be done, but if the roads are in bad condition it is impossible to cover that amount of distance and distribute the mail in a day. Hence the department in locating the routes for rural mail delivery is obliged to select localities where the roads are in the best condition, especially in the spring of the year and rainy seasons, and those are the times that farmers need free rural delivery the most, when it is difficult for them to get to town. It seems likely that free rural mail delivery may become one of the greatest inducements for making good roads. The farmers will come to understand that they cannot have this great convenience furnished to them by the government unless their roads are in such passable condition as will justify the service, hence localities will vie with each other in making the roads good enough to warrant free delivery. Another objection to rural mail delivery comes from country storekeepers who keep postoffices in their stores and consider them as means for drawing trade. They seem to fear that delivering the mail at the farmers' homes will keep trade away from their stores because the carriers who deliver the mail are permitted to carry packages for the farmers and even to peddle tobacco and cigars and take subscriptions for newspapers and magazines. The carriers are paid only $400 a year each, and as this is small compensation for the service required they are allowed the privilege of earning what they can in other ways that do not interfere with delivering the mail.

Peach Trees.

When planting the trees I cut off all broken roots; also about half the length of the long ones; cut off all the limbs and about one-third of the top of the small trees so when set they look like so many sticks stuck in the ground. If the trees start well, and throw out plenty of little limbs, I pinch off those I don't wish, and so am able to grow the tree very near vase shape, with open top, so plenty of sunshine can get in. For plant food I use chemical fertilizers solely. The phosphoric acid I supply with fine ground bone and potash in some form, usually from high-grade muriates. Canada ashes are excellent for the peach orchard. Nitrogen comes from the bone and what clover is plowed under. In setting the trees I use two or three handfuls of fine ground bone mixed with the soil, and after the roots are covered, put on a few ashes, then finish filling. After the first year sow broadcast over the land bone and potash separately.

I believe the word cultivation means a large part of the success that will come to us as fruit growers, or if we will take the two words intense cultivation and follow thoroughly on this line, we will be able to secure an excellent growth of wood and foliage of large, long leaves, of the darkest green color. If we are so fortunate as to have a good set of fruit, and it has been properly thinned, we shall have every reason to expect beautiful and luscious peaches. But to get them we must keep up this intense cultivation until the very last of August or first of September. Best fruit grows on the trees with large, healthy foliage. If the buds are not killed by the cold winter or late frosts, we get a full bloom and the peaches will set very thick, especially with some varieties. Then we have no small job on our hands thinning the little peaches; we don't thin the fruit very much until after the pit is formed in the peach, because there is what is called the June dropping, and as it would be rather unwise to do the thinning until nature had done its share. But we like to get them off before the pit gets very hard, as it takes a large supply of plant food to grow them. Thin so there will be no two peaches within 4 inches of each other; 6 inches is better, but it requires the closest attention to get the men to thin them.—E Bliss.

Planting and Cultivating Corn.

This will be a late spring for planting corn and hence extra care should be taken in the selection and testing of the seed so that there will be no failure in getting a good stand at the first planting. Because the spring is late, do not be in too great a hurry to commence planting. Do not try to mud the corn in, but have the ground in as good condition as possible before the corn is planted. If the seed is good and the ground in good condition it will come up quickly and make a strong, healthy growth. Replanted corn fields never do so well as those where a good stand is obtained at the first planting. If the corn is flat planted, set the fine-toothed harrow at work as soon as the planting is finished and keep it going until the corn is high enough so that the two-horse cultivator can be used in it. The harrow will keep the surface of the ground pulverized. This will be beneficial in two ways, it will hold the moisture in the soil by preventing evaporation and it will enable the heat from the sun to warm the ground, for evaporation produces cold, and preventing evaporation holds both the heat and moisture in the soil and heat and moisture will make the corn grow. The harrow will also kill the young weeds as fast as they start and keep the hills of corn clean and free from weeds. This will save a great deal of after work in pulling or hoeing weeds from the hills. The harrow is the best hoe for this purpose.

If the corn is listed in, as soon as it is up, so that the lister cultivator can be used, it should be set at work. This pulverizes the ridges and stirs the earth and kills the weeds in the sides of the furrows.

As soon as the harrows and lister cultivators are laid aside set the shovel cultivators at work and keep them going so as to get entirely over the corn once each week until the corn gets so large that it cannot be cultivated any longer. Do not wait for the weeds to start before cultivating, but keep the cultivators constantly at work until the corn is finally laid by. If any cockle burs or noxious weeds of any kind escape the cultivator send a man through the field with a sharp hoe and eradicate every one of them before any of the seed has a chance to ripen. One weed going to seed this year may produce a thousand next year, and weeds take nourishment from the soil that should go into the growth of the grain.

Orchard Treatment.

Good drainage, natural or artificial, is essential to success. Trees are impatient of wet feet.

Good tillage increases the available food supply of the soil and also conserves its moisture.

Tillage should be begun just as soon as the ground is dry enough in the spring, and should be repeated as often as once in ten days throughout the growing season, which extends from spring until July or August.

Only cultivated crops should be allowed in orchards early in the season. Grain and hay should never be grown.

Even hoed or cultivated crops may rob the trees of moisture and fertility if they are allowed to stand above the tree roots.

Watch a sod orchard. It will begin to fail before you know it.

Probably nine-tenths of the apple orchards are in sod, and many of them are meadows. Of course, they are failing.

The remedy for these apple failures is to cut down many of the orchards. For the remainder, the treatment is cultivation, fertilization, spraying—the trinity of orthodox apple growing.

Potash is the chief fertilizer to be applied to fruit trees, particularly after they come into bearing.

Potash may be had in wood ashes and muriate of potash. It is most commonly used in the latter form. An annual application of potash should be made upon bearing orchards, 500 pounds to the acre.

Phosphoric acid is the second important fertilizer to be applied artificially to orchards. Of the plain superphosphates from 300 to 500 pounds may be applied to the acre.

Nitrogen can be obtained cheapest by means of thorough tillage (to promote nitrification) and nitrogenous green manures.

Barn manures are generally more economically used when applied to farm crops than when applied to orchards; yet they can be used with good results, particularly when rejuvenating the old orchards.

Cultivation may be stopped late in the season, and a crop can then be sown upon the land. This crop may serve as a cover or protection to the soil, and as a green manure.—Professor Bailey, Cornell University.

The liver filters out the poisonous germs which enter the system. Just so surely as the liver regulates the system, so do Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets regulate the liver. Keep this in mind, and you solve the problem of good health and good living.